

The Admiral Semmes House
802 Government Street
Mobile, Alabama

HABS No. ALA-56

HABS
ALA,
49-MOBI,
56-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT NO. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey
E. Walter Burzhardt, District Officer
Auburn, Alabama

ADMIRAL SEMMES HOUSE
802 Government Street
Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama.

HABS. 11-11-36
ALA,
49-MOBI,
56-

Ownership:

Present Owner: Admiral Semmes Estate.

Previous Owners: Peter Horta.
Admiral Raphael Semmes.

Date of Erection: 1858

Architect: Unknown.

Builder: Peter Horta.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: Two.

Materials of Construction: Two story brick; wood porches;
cast iron balustrades; cast iron steps and railings.

Other Existing Records:

See: "HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF OLD MOBILE"
By John F. Glennon - Rosemary Glennon
Pen and Ink drawing by Chici Glennon Lasley.

See: Birmingham News, December 6, 1936.

"SEMMES, NAVAL HERO OF CONFEDERACY"
By Varian Feare, (Mrs. E. W. Burkhardt)

Compiled by: Katherine Floyd, Auburn, Ala.

Approved: E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer, HABS
12/9/1936

T.T.W. 8/4/37

Additional Data: Mobile's most famous citizen, one of sacred memory, is Raphael Semmes, the Great Southern Naval Commander during the "War between the States",

He was born September 27, 1809 in Charles County, Maryland, died at his Mobile residence August 30, 1877.

At Duncan Place, the corner of Government and Royal Streets in Mobile, stands a monument erected to his memory on the granite base thereof, in bas-relief is a likeness of his beloved Alabama.

In Mobile there also stands a charming town house of French influence, two stories with double verandas at the front enhanced with lovely wrought-iron balustrades. Built of brick with stone lintels, simple denticulation in brick at the front roof line, fully and substantially shuttered, and with an extensive wing at the rear, it is, indeed architecturally a gem of its kind.

The home was built about 1858 by Peter Horta, of Mobile. In 1871 it was purchased by popular subscription and presented to the Confederate naval hero, Admiral Semmes dwelt there until his death in August, 1877.

We are told there is a movement afoot to repurchase this home and make thereof a shrine to the memory of the "stormy petrel".

It would mean the preservation of an architectural treasure. For he who studies the proportions of the house, its massing, its details is fascinated. The exquisite iron lacework, the delicate iron balustrades and grills of the four steps, are a delight. The old garden too, is intact, crackling magnolia leaves carpeting the whole.

Within the old mahogany stair, the marble mantels, the paneled double and single doors, the nicely turned mouldings, stand as replicas of the golden age. It would, indeed, be a simple matter to restore it to a position for service and let us hope that such a future is in store for it before it, too, "is gone with the wind."

Source of Material: Marian Feare, (Mrs. E. W. Burkhardt)
Auburn, Alabama.